

Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Councilmembers
CC: City Manager Jim Nuse
From: Will Hampton, Communications Director
Date: 03/04/10
Re: Downtown Master Plan

At the Feb. 23 City Council packet briefing, Councilmember Honeycutt asked for a list of major changes to the Downtown Master Plan from the first draft, as well a list of outstanding issues, i.e., issues not resolved by the Plan.

In order to make the driving tour and March 11 Council meeting discussion as productive as possible, I'm providing this overview in advance.

Major changes

- The Heritage Trail has been added as a catalytic project, though we have not developed the kind of detailed cost information for it the way we have for the other catalytic projects.
- Chapter 4 has been extensively rewritten so that it is clearly a set of recommendations for the future Form Based Code. The Planning and Zoning Commission provided significant input on the recommended guidelines for land use and design standards.
- The "Creekside District" has been added as a Plan Area, and features Mays, Sheppard and Lewis streets as primary pedestrian corridors from Main Street to future development on Brushy Creek. The thinking is that the streetscape on those streets is more intensive than on other streets in the area, providing an exceptional pedestrian experience from the downtown historic core to the creek.
- The neighborhood east of Lewis and Spring is now exclusively single family residential, with the exception of some light commercial and multi-family residential along Main Street and Georgetown Street. Much of this area is included in the proposed Historic Residential Character Overlay, the boundaries of which were added after the first draft of the Plan was issued.
- The roundabouts originally proposed for U.S. 79 are gone, gone, gone! The Plan does still recommend roundabouts, at Liberty and Burnet, Main and Burnet, and Main and Georgetown.
- The Form Based Code was originally recommended to be applied to the entire Plan area all at once. Now, the Plan recommends a phased approach. This was discussed with the City Council at your Dec. 3 meeting.

- Proposed zoning densities for the Teachers Addition (the little neighborhood north of Brushy Creek sandwiched between Summit Street and Mays Street) are now higher than originally proposed. We received requests from homeowners who live north of Sunset Drive for the change, primarily because of the changing nature of the neighborhood and its proximity to commercial development on IH 35. In essence, we've mirrored the zoning recommendations for the south side of Brushy Creek in the Flat. The more we looked at it, the more sense it made from a long-term planning perspective to recommend higher intensities there. The P&Z discussed this change in detail at its November retreat.
- The parking recommendations have been moved out of the Appendix to Chapter 3, Implementation and Policy Initiatives.
- The recommended "trigger" for applying the Form Based Code for single family properties is now based on increases in square footage instead of valuation increases. This change was recommended by area developers, who felt square footage was a more objective measure than valuation. We also believe it allows developers more flexibility when assembling properties for larger projects.

Outstanding Issues

- The proposed trail on Brushy Creek, particularly the Heritage Trail concept, has been popular with everyone we've talked to – expect those who own homes on Vista Avenue that back up to, or extend to the middle of, the creek. They are recommending the trail be built on the south side of the creek, up on the bluff. We have told them their concerns about safety, criminal activity and division of property will be addressed when the trail is being designed. We've noted there are currently no funds available for this project.
- The proposed social services campus on the East Main Street ballfields remains controversial. The Greater Round Rock Community Foundation, owner of the property, held a meeting Feb. 22 at First United Methodist Church to discuss their plans with the neighborhood. The Foundation, as of the date of this memo, has not submitted a formal PUD application to the City. The Master Plan contains a note (in three places) that recommends the property be planned to accommodate a mix of open space and family-oriented social service facilities and administrative offices.